

**SPOTLIGHT
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F. Lewis**CAPITAL REPORT****U.S. Aid
Waylaid!**

By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

WASHINGTON, March 12—
In an Administration that seems to dedicate itself increasingly to the spectaculars of hucksterism, in presenting its pitches to the public, I suppose it was to be expected that the same technique would be adopted in the four billion dollar foreign aid program.

The mail response to members of the Senate and House demonstrates, however, that the American mind at the grass-roots differentiates between soap-powders and serious principles.

For all the ballyhoo of the Statler Hotel conference, with Eric Johnston as the MC and Independence Harry setting aside for once his dogmas of partisanship, the postal results have shown no change.

I think Mr. Truman, indeed, is a little contaminated by permitting himself to be conned into participation. He is more convincing when he is championing the "peepul." And the "peepul's" participation in the Statler conference was confined strictly to some numerical charts as to how many advertising exposures will be necessary to clinch the four billion figure, and what the per-exposure cost will be.

What the public really wants to know is whether the foreign aid program is accomplishing anything in the fight to contain communism in its present limits and to beguile ourselves into the good-will of the citizenry of critical countries in the Cold War.

ONCE AGAIN, I resort to the Indo-Chinese kingdom of Laos, looking down the gunbarrel of Chinese Communism in Southeast Asia. In the foreign aid program accomplishing anything there? I have the following from one of the most able and respected non-government Americans in Laos:

"Perhaps I can tie it up in the remark that we certainly have plans, programs and blue prints. Also, all sorts of resolutions. But these seem to be the preface only to inaction."

And from another of my correspondents:

"The people are full of fear and they wonder why the Americans are here. One of them said to me not so long ago: 'Why are your people here? When you are gone we shall have nothing to remember you by except two compounds of houses that we never could afford to live in. You have not improved our life, though you have enriched our already rich rulers.'"

And an unpublicized report from the Government's own intelligence machinery:

"So, once more, the U.S. Government is not only failing in its object of improving the economy of the country (Laos), but actually—and again 'as usual'—so stimulating speculation as to create a super-wealthy group of corrupt politicians whose sudden extreme wealth and obviously extravagant living create a glaring contrast to the common people."

Would Mr. Eric Johnston like to discuss this in his next spectacular?

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